REMARKS

To expedite prosecution and without prejudice, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitation of claim 5, which has correspondingly been cancelled.

To recap the prosecution history of this application, in the previous Office Action, the Examiner has entered three (3) different prior art rejection of the claims. More specifically, the claims were first rejected under § 103 based on Wang (U.S. Patent No. 5,991,746) and Hyde, Jr. U.S. Patent No. 6,038,553) and based on Adunehdi, et al., Wang and Hyde, Jr. *See*, paper No. 7. Further, the claims were rejected under § 103 based on Pierce, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,151,591 and Bernard, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,717,596). *See*, paper No. 13. In the current Office Action, the Examiner has entered three (3) new rejections under § 102 based on Horbal, Wilson and Eckert. In addition, the Examiner has entered a § 103 rejection based on Horbal and Moss.

Accordingly, throughout the prosecution history of this application, there have been seven (7) different prior art rejections. Applicants urge the Examiner to reconsider his position in view of the following remarks.

Once again, Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art relied upon by the Examiner is not relevant to the claimed invention. Indeed, Horbal '506 only relates to postage meters, which are connected to a network. As can be seen on Figures 1 and 3, all postage meters (15) include a reset module (26) and a communication module (27) and each of these communication modules comprises a modem and is consequently connected to a network (the telephone system 34).

In the same way, Eckert describes a system for resetting postage meters (2) via telephones (3). However, if it is true that the meters (2) are not connected to the network (4) (this reference only relates to electromechanical franking machines) and if we consider the telephone (3) as a terminal, it is clear that this terminal is not at all a supervision terminal which can display all the indexes of a set of franking machines.

Wilson relates to a process for resetting postage meters. The meter illustrated in this reference is really a franking machine which is not connected to a network (as claimed in the present invention i.e., without modem connection). However, the described process concerns the resetting of the counters (ascending and descending) of the meter (11) via a terminal (19) connected to the network (2). In such a resetting process the postal agent enters the serial number of a specific meter and then the contents of the ascending and descending counters readable on this meter, in order to receive an acknowledgment from the postal server (computer 18).

The same process repeats again for another meter.

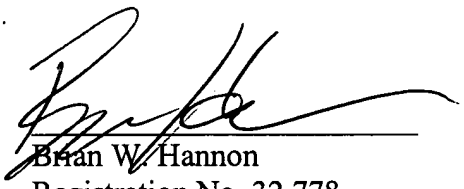
On the contrary, the invention relates to a process for monitoring franking machines consumptions (connected and not connected machines) and consequently, after the link with the management server (postal server) is established, it is possible to display on the supervision terminal, not only the index of one meter, but the indexes of all the meters of the user.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. However, in the event that the Examiner maintains his position that the case is not allowable, Applicants formally request a personal interview with the Examiner and his

supervisor to discuss this case. Thus, submitted herewith is a separate formal Request for Interview.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



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APPENDIX
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 5 is canceled.

The claims are amended as follows:

Claim 1 (Three Times Amended). A process for monitoring the consumptions of a plurality of franking machines through a public communication network, at least one of the franking machines being electrically isolated from the public communications network, the process comprising the steps of:

first establishing a link with a management server through the public communications network, via at least one supervision terminal that is independent of the isolated franking machine, in accordance with a protocol of communication; and

subsequently proceeding with an exchange of data between the supervision terminal and the management server during which a user (1) acquires at the supervision terminal a current invoicing index indicative of the isolated franking machine and (2) receives a code of authorization to frank in order to validate the subsequent frankings of the isolated franking machine, wherein said step of data exchange further comprises:

displaying, at the supervision terminal (1) a list of printing heads associated with the plurality of franking machines, and (2) for each printing head, a last invoicing index validated by the management server.